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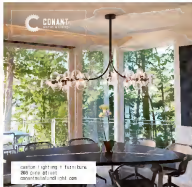


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WINTER 2015-16

**Cold temps make winter the perfect time to nest.**

This issue of Seven Days quarterly supplement about home design and real estate takes you inside cozy abodes—from a goddess dome to a tiny house. Plus, we help you stack that firewood!

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ON THE COVER

Nest and Michaela Whitby's goddess dome in Weatherford, VT. Photo by Sam Mazza.

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PHOTO: KIM WILSON

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# Dome, Sweet Home

*The ups, downs and all-  
arounds of spherical living*  
BY AMY LILLY | PHOTOS BY TOM MCNEILL

When Mike and Michaela Whitty pull into their driveway in Weathersfield, they often find strangers photographing their house. No wonder: The Wittys live in a geodesic dome house — one of those spherical structures made of interlocking triangular panels that popped up around the country in the 1970s.



In the couple's quirky example, the sphere sits on a base of radially jutting cubes — their 5½ ft. base. And the whole cedar-shingled structure is perched atop a thick cylindrical core ringed by 11 concrete columns on a steep slope of ledge rock. The house is known locally, according to Wittys, as “the spaceship golfed house.”

She and Mike, young professionals who work in Haverhill, N.H., and Stowe, are the house's third owners but the first to call it their primary residence. A builder from Connecticut named David Purdy constructed it as a ski house in 1976. Purdy is now 99 and until recently lived next door in a Swiss-chalet-style shanty.



Opposite page: Loop in balconies

Interior and exterior lighting is fixed off their windows and balconies

The garden, done this way, often do 100% ventilation

There is a big balcony from top

So the single window along the wall, side set in the light

Original wooden floorboards and set of built-in from the point of view

For those in a long way the outer perimeter of the house

A circular of course means around the central core

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## Dome, Sweet Home

When Perlin put the dome house on the market, Yards magazine ran a story dubbing it "The Wombenifical Wonder" in its February 1877 issue. The house got more press, perhaps, 1951 — the scribble on the Whittier scrap board with it in fact — as the Boston Globe copies of both articles came with the house.

What impressed these writers still impresses today: not just the oddity of the form, but the craft that went into it and its honey feel. The Whitties purchased it in 2005, after a year of house hunting. Michaels recalls, "The second I walked inside, I was like, 'Shit, I can live here!'"

Betsy is from a deck on the first-floor level, where those gutting cubes turn out to be a laundry room, a bath, and two cozy guest rooms. Each of these bed rooms contains a built-in bunk bed and a tiny closet can built-in dresser. The distance between these two features is barely the width of a person, yet there's room for a window in each room.

Perlin, a professional carpenter, built the bunk beds, which originally fill three rooms. (The Whitties converted one to the laundry room and jettisoned the tiny washer and dryer Perlin had squeezed into the bathroom.) He also made a fourth bunk for an upstairs loft room (note an office) which sits across from the master bedroom and bath. In all, the house originally kept 10 sleepers.

The rooms radiate from a circular core, which is beautifully lined with vertical cedar planks inside the house. The center of the dome — the second floor — is one flight up. There, all notions of separate ceilings and walls disappear.

The dome's square divided by the two angles, apparently by four feet on

each side, which make up the sphere. Six triangles along the east side are windows. Along the west side is the third story loft. The looms crisscross extend into the empty space of the sphere, and the whole structure is supported by 11 salvaged telephone poles.

**THE SECOND I WALKED INSIDE, I WAS LIKE, 'YEAH, I CAN LIVE HERE.'**  
MICHAELA WHITT

The dome's compact floor is thoughtfully shaped because of that spherical core. Its built-in are angled along the outer perimeter. They include a gallery-like kitchen, a curved dining table and benches, one of which is a salvaged chalk paint, and a long couch with one ottoman bed and table. Mike, the marketing and sales director of Van Tapp Family Brewing in Stone, took out the other and table to make room for a small beer fridge.

Living in this space takes some adjustment, say the Whitties. You can't hang curtains from rectangular windows angled somewhere between vertical and horizontal, so the couple works with the sun. They also have to periodically dust the "walls" — that is, the incrementally angled triangular panels. And, says Michaels, "You can't juggle to the stars and get everything. You have to think about it for a bit."

Yet dome living has its advantages. Dreamless dreams are more energy efficient: there are fewer beams because they use less surface area to enclose greater volume. That cuts down on exposure to summer heat and winter cold. And heat radiating around inside it, it around the sphere of shape — already structurally strong due to its triangular design — instead of hitting a wall. Mike says the house heats up its own sun, and in the summer he can create a "faux" effect with air circulation by opening the four floor windows and the master bedroom skylight. They rarely





would use the air conditioner, and they built relatively little furniture at first.

Rockmaster Puller recognized all these advantages, and challenges, when he received a patent for the passive design in 1994. The structure was invented in Germany in 1822, but Puller, an American architect and designer, worked out its complicated mathematics in the 1940s.

In the 1960s, passive homes began springing up for all sorts of purposes, from mass entertainment to government operations. Two iconic examples from that era are within driving distance of Vermont are still in use: pavilions built for the 1964 New York and 1967 Montreal world's fairs. Now these domes serve, respectively, as the Quebec Zoo aviary and an open-air train structure enclosing the buildings of the Montreal Biosphère (not to be confused with the city's Biosphère, which was built as a velodrome).

Puller had envisioned the possibility of genetic domes as homes from the beginning, he hoped they would become an affordable, mass-produced solution to the power-hungry shortages. But his patent meant that DTH builders had no access to designs. That changed when Lloyd Kahn published two how-to books, *Domebook One* (1970) and *Domebook Two* (1973). (The latter is preserved online at [www.dome.com](http://www.dome.com).)

In the mid-1970s, Ith entered the market.

Pertus, however, worked with an architect. "The kid—the architect, per se—... was very green, and I was the older generation," he recalled with a chuckle on a recent tour of the home. Pertus had become bored with building Colonial-style homes and wanted to try something new.

The imagination vividly recalls making that the dome was one-fifth of a turn off its correct position. "I had to pick that up at 45° points" with a crane, Pertus remembers. Fortunately, the structure was so strong and light that it lifted and turned easily.

That realization had set well for the Whittey house, which retains much of its mid-'70s character. And, as the couple points out, while Vermont has at least a handful of garden domes, none in elevated life form. The Whittey's bulldozed down, looking like it's about to launch itself off the ledge, is a stark side effect of an error and a building experiment that went themselves boundary pushing. 🐾

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yuletide season, may your hearts be  
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# nest House Hunt!

Following first-time home buyers on the search for their dream homes

BY CAROLYN FOX



Nicholas Adams and Jessica Hendry Nelson

If you've been through the process, you know there's a learning curve, complete with near misses, drama and mystifying paperwork along the way. If you're starting to think about getting out of that rental and buying your own home, our House Hunters just might have some eye-opening tips for you.

In August, Jessica Hendry Nelson and Nicholas Adams got married. With the wedding came the desire to settle down in a home of their own. The 31-year-old couple — Jessica is a writer and the author of *If Only People Could Follow Directions*, A Memoir, Nick a data analyst at Building Bright Futures — is renting a one-bedroom duplex in a town of the 18th-century Wisconsin house. They love to live in cities, says Jessica, "But it's too small for us. It's not! We're ready to buy a house."

Working with Julie Gabeinski at Coldwell Banker Nichols & Boardman Realty, their search was over as soon as it began — until everything fell apart.

"We started looking at the end of August," says Jessica, and they immediately found a great house on two acres in Georgia, conveniently located near the highway.

"It was beautiful outside," she continues. "Architecture is our thing. It's really important to us. Old homes with character, nice architecture, details, beautiful floors and moldings, dry ceilings." This place fit the bill with its exposed beams, hardwood floor, crown moldings, 6 1/2 acres and even,

big shed to accommodate Nick's wood-working projects.

An added bonus: "We liked the journey," she says. "We weren't on top of each other there."

They put in an offer. It was accepted. However, during inspection, they found out that the house needed a lot of work — about \$15,000 worth. "The sellers weren't willing to negotiate, so we had to back out," explains Jessica. "It was very whelming." Julie walked us through all the steps. She helped us through all of the options. She did her best to try to negotiate with them, but they were really, really stubborn."

Since that heartbreaking letdown, "We've been looking all the time," Jessica says. "There was a period where I wanted to look at every house that could conceivably work for us, even if I knew in my heart of hearts it wouldn't work," she explains. "It ends up making a lot of sense. I had to learn to be more discerning up front."

Jessica's been keeping a log of their journey, filled with "durable emotions and lessons learned along the way." We've accepted a few of her entries on the right. [Twitter](#)



Photo: iStockphoto.com

## What they're hunting for:

**BUDGET:** Three bedrooms, preferably three bathrooms

**STYLE:** "We are hoping to get something old, with character, that I might need a little work, but not too much work," says Jessica, who notes that Nick is "very handy" and a good woodworker. "Anything built before 1950 is really what we're looking for."

**LOCATION:** Within a 30-minute drive of Burlington

**LAND:** roughly an acre

**PRICE:** \$450,000-\$600,000

**DETAILS:** garage, preferably detached, parking, porch, hardwood floors

When Jessica and Nick have found their home, we'll be giving them a housewarming present: a four-hour home design consultation and \$100 gift certificate from Stowe Kitchen Bath & Linens.

## Follow along!

We'll keep you posted on our House Hunters progress as our website at [secondcitynest.com](http://secondcitynest.com) and our biweekly e-newsletter *Nest Notes*. [Sign up at [secondcitynest.com/newsletters](http://secondcitynest.com/newsletters) for tips on home design and real estate.]

## REAL ESTATE

*As the weather gets colder I feel more anxious to get into a new home before winter bears down. At this point I'm not looking seriously. We keep thinking about the house we lost in Ontario. Nothing ever seems to change, but then we remember the huge repairs it requires and come back to reality. Have to let it go!*

This house in Sparksboro is lovely, and well within our budget, but so big and a bit farther from Burlington than we'd prefer. The owner was home when we went to visit. She was baking cookies and having a glass of wine. She was really lovely and told us that their reason for moving was downsizing. "We don't even go upstairs," she said. With a massive first-floor master bedroom upstairs, she said, "I wouldn't either." We've decided 1700 to 1800 square feet is plenty for us. It seems strange to think that we might have to "settle" for more square footage than we'd like considering how few houses are under 2000 square feet.

*After having my eye on this house in Colchester for a long time, I finally convinced Nick to take a look. Even though it's a bit above our budget, we love the location, right next to Waquetta Bay State Park and the proximity to Burlington and I-89. The age and style are also right up our alley. House hunting is getting more difficult with the time change. We have to wait after work most of the time, and by 5:30 p.m. it's already dark. We'd driven by the house, though, and had a good feeling for the location. The yard is huge, and had a good fee lighter for the location, which is ideal for us.*

The first thing we noticed, after getting out of our car was the noise from nearby Route 2, which I hadn't realized was so busy. We're really hoping for a peaceful quiet location, so that was a bit of a bummer. To justify the price, the house needed to be perfect for us. It was back to square one as we go.



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# Tabletop Exercises

*Vermont artisans are creating some flat-out fantastic tables*

BY BEN PICARD

For hundreds of years, Vermont furniture and cabinetry makers have carved out niches for themselves in the Green Mountain State, taking advantage of the area's abundant and diverse species of trees including pine, cherry, maple, birch and oak.

While some of Vermont's biggest furniture manufacturers have closed their doors in recent decades, individual artisans have continued the tradition. Many produce high-quality, handmade pieces that are sought after around the world. In this story, Nest talks with three Vermont table makers with very different styles.

## David Hurwitz Originals

David Hurwitz, of Randolph, has been carving wood since he was 8 years old. Now 63, the Hartsburgh, N.Y., artist has earned a living as a professional woodworker for nearly three decades.

Hurwitz's experience shows in his work, most of which are made of wood and stone, nearly all of it sourced locally using certified sustainable practices. Many of Hurwitz's tables and chairs feature his signature style: wood carved smooth into rich, undulating forms that resemble flags billowing in a breeze or waves rippling across a pond.

"We always had a more organic sense of form, more curvature instead

of flat planes and angles," he explains. Growing up in the Adirondacks, Hurwitz adds, he's always had a close affinity with the natural world. "And I watched a lot of cartoons as a kid, *Dr. Seuss* and so on," he adds.

Indeed, Hurwitz's Scandi-mod style has earned him national acclaim. In 2003, one of his pieces won the best in show award at the annual Vermont Fine Furniture & Woodworking Festival in Woodstock. In 2004, he was voted Vermont Woodworker of the Year by the Vermont Wood Manual Workers Association.



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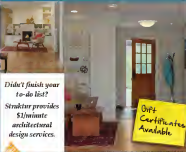
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Locally, Blawie's pieces have shown at the Hibernian in Newport, Beantown Museum, Helen Day Art Center in Shrew, Ping Hollow Vermont State Craft Center in Burlington, Studio Place Arts in Barre and Ruchgott Ranch, a gallery in Shelburne. Elsewhere, his works have been featured at the Haxton Center for Contemporary Craft, the Winston Elberts Museum in Pennsylvania, Denver International Airport, Delaware Art Museum and the Hickory Museum of Art in North Carolina.

Because all of Blawie's tables are custom made, it takes time to turn them around. Some dining tables take him two weeks; others two months. And, as he does all the work by hand, he typically has a six- to eight-month backlog.

"Most of my pieces involve a lot of carving," Blawie explains, "so that's where the hours really rack up."

## Vermont Farm Table

Six years ago, Daatta and Jessica Glasco founded Vermont Farm Table. Since then, the Charlotte couple has expanded the business, moving into a state-of-the-art woodworking facility in Bristol that employs four full-time woodworkers. The company has a retail outlet in downtown Burlington and a significant online presence.

Vermont Farm Table has earned a national reputation for making tables with solid wood, traditional building techniques and environmentally friendly finishes. All are custom made to order. According to sales manager Sam Koch, about half of the company's tables are made from reclaimed wood from local farms, mills and other buildings; the new tables nearly all come from locally sourced wood harvests.



Vermont Farm Table's pieces range from basic, six-fills square and rectangular kitchen tables to *fourier dining* and conference-room tables. Kocher notes that the fastest growing part of the business is actually commercial sales. The company's tables can be seen at many Burlington restaurants, including the *Sherry Press* and *the Wood*. Elsewhere,

VFT has made pieces for the Venetian hotel and resort in Las Vegas and Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

While Vermont Farm Table also makes smaller kitchen items including cutting boards, pizza peels and rolling pins, "Custom hand-made tables are the main focus of our company," Kocher says. "We're really good at them, and people are really happy with them."



## Wood and Metal Inspired

Leah Bishop has been crafting tables and other furniture for less than two years, though you'd never know it from looking at his unusual creations. The 44-year-old Shelton Springs resident left a career as general manager of Kaytime Automotive Operations in Colchester a few years ago to devote himself full time to making tables, cabinets, kitchen islands and other furniture. Nearly all of his pieces, which are on display in the Colchester store he opened in April with his partner, Tawney McFarland, are crafted from reclaimed materials from Vermont's agriculture and industry past.

None exemplifies Bishop's approach more than his so-called Vermont History Table. He made the circular high-top using the flywheel from a 19th-century farm implement called a

folded shoulder, which was essentially a horse-powered treadmill for churning dog man. The table's base consists of an old wooden axle from the Vermont Marble Company in Proctor and a metal locking system forged in the old St. Albans Foundry.

A similar table made by Bishop, which was purchased by H&B Brewing in St. Albans City, was made from a line pulley salvaged from a century-old machine shop nearby.

Yet another glass-topped table features a steel furnace heat exchanger. Initially, Bishop considered turning it into a wine rack but says its rounded heat exchanger was a perfect fit for wine bottles. "Then I saw *the*, you know what? IFT could put a good showcase of lights in the wine bottles, that would look so much more."

He did, and it does. Needless to say,



much of Bishop's pieces are unique. Despite his limited experience as a furniture maker, he has a knack for discovering interesting and creative applications for salvaged objects. One customer whose house the table looks off an old sewing machine, cast iron furnace parts and the chain links from an antique tractor. At Bishop puts it, "I love finding interesting uses for this." ♥

## INFO

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# Tiny in the City

*Will micro homes multiply in Burlington?*

BY MOLLY WALSH | PHOTOS BY JAMES BUCK

When Ruby Perry and her husband, Andy Simon, were building their 400-square-foot house in Burlington's South End last year, it became the talk of the Five Sisters neighborhood. That's not surprising: It's one of the smallest houses in Burlington, and it took shape as the national fascination with the tiny-house movement was inspiring documentaries, TV shows, do-it-yourself classes and conventions.

The red clapboard dwelling on Locust Street is interesting for another reason, too. It's not tucked into the woods or sitting on a seasonal lot; it's plunked down in a city backyard. So, are super-small houses viable in an urban setting?

Perry answers that question with a resounding yes. For starters, if housing in small quarters starts to feel confining — a city like Burlington offers us a late-size array of activities and amenities. Also, she suggests, tiny houses are ideal for urban traffic is tight spot.

Could tiny houses be a solution to Burlington's housing shortage? And can anyone erect a tiny house in their back yard? Not necessarily — Burlington's zoning codes make the prospect tenuous, depending on where and what is proposed.

But where there's a will, there's a way. It "should not be daunting to anyone," Perry says. "We treated it as a community-building process and met early and often, with our neighbors as well as planning and zoning."

The house she and Simon built is



## BRIEF PAGE

Why they and Andy believe they have it in a South Burlington fixer-upper is another story.

The kitchen has open shelving and a multipurpose island.

Living space fits a dining table and seating area.

A garden and park are just from the open backdoor entrance.



located in their daughter and son-in-law's backyard and owned by the young couple, who are raising a toddler. The arrangement is an exercise in estate planning. The grandparents paid for the \$75,000 structure and took charge of the permitting and construction, knowing it would be a way to give their assets to the next generation in advance.

The house was allowed as an "accessory dwelling," defined under the city's 576-page zoning ordinance as an efficiency or a bedroom unit that is "subordinate" to, and does not exceed 30 percent of the total habitable floor area of, a single-family dwelling.

The little red house also had to stay within a 35-percent lot coverage limit in the neighborhood, which is zoned as residential low density, meaning it's a district intended primarily for single-family detached dwellings and duplexes.

One of the biggest hurdles was about parking. Simon and Perry, who don't own a car, convinced the Burlington Development Review Board to waive the normal requirement for one off-street parking space. Instead of an asphalt driveway in their courtyard, they have a garden.

And, yes, it's allowable to rent out the small house to nonfamily members so long as the primary dwelling is an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling, says David B. White, Burlington director of planning and zoning.

For a retired 60-year-old community development worker and activist in the group home Open Space Burlington, believes that dwelling small about housing is a great idea for the city. And she's convinced the public is ready for new ideas on housing.

"It's not just a fix," she says about small houses. "It's a whole movement about living differently."

It may not be a movement just yet.



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## Tiny in the City

in Vermont. White says he's not seeing many proposals for what would once be tiny houses in Burlington. Nor are local real estate agents getting calls from legions of prospective tiny house buyers. "It hasn't caught on yet," says Robb's Blandy Holmes, a realtor at Century 21 Jack Associates in South Burlington. "We're not quite there yet."

What exactly is a tiny house? It's generally understood to be a structure less than 400 square feet, sometimes on wheels. Perry and Stone's abode is a tad bigger and has a foundation. But it embodies many tiny house principles, starting with the potential to save money.

"Our major motivation was to find a way to live cheaply," says Perry.

That's often the driving factor when people build small, says Lora Mearns, a small-house designer, consultant and blogger who teaches at Vermont Green Design, the local school in Woodfield.

When people aren't working to pay off a fat mortgage, they have more liberty to choose the lifestyle they want

— jobs or volunteer work that satisfy, or pursue of personal ambitions.

"One of the words I most hear associated with tiny houses is 'freedom,'" notes Mearns, who knows it a 100 square foot house she built herself for \$25,000.

**IT ISN'T JUST A FAD.  
IT'S A WHOLE MOVEMENT  
ABOUT LIVING DIFFERENTLY.**

RUBY PERRY

Most of the tiny houses that survive when Vermont are in rural settings, but Mearns believes the model will eventually hit the city. "I think there's probably going to be more in urban areas than rural areas," she says. "People are trying to figure out ways to live in the city affordably."

In Burlington, tiny houses would be allowed under zoning in much of the city as accessory dwellings, but they have to meet height, lot coverage and parking requirements, says White.



Burlington does have one plan for fans of tiny houses, though. There's no minimum square-footage requirement for new homes. "Construct it in your backyard, and drive you go," White says. "Whether it's a tiny house or a traditional carriage house, that certainly would be an option for somebody as an accessory dwelling unit."

Still, due to high land costs, he predicts that new apartments in the 350 to 500 square-foot range will come to Burlington first. Apartment units can be stacked upward, maximizing density and financial return on land.

Perry's own journey to living small happened gradually. She and her husband owned a country house in Westford for many years and decided to downsize about six years ago. They bought a school bus and explored the country, living in the vehicle on and off, as well as in apartments in the Burlington area.

The tiny-house idea came after Perry's daughter and her husband bought a single-family house across from Colchester Park. The young couple were expecting a child, and it agreed it would be nice for the grandparents to live close by.

James and Perry ended their retirement funds to build the little house 20 feet from the main house's back door. The young couple sold the older house to simplify city life, live up to their environmental standards and help care for granddaughter Lily Park, now 18 and in college.

The lot's flat, city, U-shaped interior of their house is now part of a new studio apartment. The kitchen has open shelving, a microwave, a small sink, and a super-efficient refrigerator and freezer. There's enough room for a wood-topped table with two chairs, a nook against one wall and a wood stove that provides most of the heat for the heavily insulated home, which has 12-inch-thick walls. Two slipper chairs, a nook and a low-green ottoman form a sitting area in a corner next to an open bedroom.

With a slug garden right outside and the park visible beyond the backyards picket fence, the house doesn't feel cramped.

"It doesn't take a lot of maintenance, and it reflects our taste," said Perry. 

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# Stacking Up

*An aspiring woodchuck offers beginner's advice on storing fiewood*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KEN PICARD

Let's get this out of the way from the start: I'm no woodpile master. My ancestors weren't lumberjacks back in the old country, nor have my kindfolk been stacking fiewood in the Green Mountains since Ethan Allen fi learned to wield an ax.

Also, if you're reading this story expecting instructions on how to turn your woodpile into a children's fort, run, run, snowy owl or the Star Wars Millennium Falcon: stop reading right now. A quick internet search will turn up directions for building all manner of whimsical wood creations, including one beehive-shaped woodpile called a Hobbitman. You pretty sure that's German for "My wife does all the painting, so I have way too much time on my hands."

Indeed, YouTube is rife with videos of hirsute men in hunter-plaid expounding their original preferences for what

constitutes a proper woodpile. Several even suggest that you can judge your neighbors' characters by how well they stack their fiewood. Personally, I judge my neighbors' characters by their willingness to clean up their dog's poop, and their occasional tent is saying my kids are eating dinner at their house. That their woodpile happens to have the structural integrity of a suspension bridge just reminds me that they're back slashes too.

Still, as Henry David Thoreau once wrote, "Every man looks upon his woodpile with a sort of affection."



## TO BUILD A WOODPILE FROM A CORD OF WOOD, YOU'LL NEED:

- A pair of sturdy boots, work gloves and a pocket knife
- Three or four wooden pallets (available free at many local businesses)
- Two tarps: one as ground cover (optional) and the other to keep snow off the stack.
- Eight to 10 bricks, preferably one loaded with holes in them
- A roll of clothsline or other weather-resistant rope
- A free afternoon and/or several non-writing teenagers with sturdy backs

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## Stacking Up

When I looked upon mine from last year, it was with lamentation and mild embarrassment. So I did some home work and found up on how to construct a sturdy New England woodpile.

When it's built and done, a wood pile needs to perform several basic functions. First, it should allow newly cut wood to season, preferably for at least a year. Burning green 5' stacked (or split) cordwood is wasteful; it can also lead to dangerous levels of creosote buildup in your chimney and cause a house fire.

Second, a woodpile should keep your 5' wood neat, easy to access, off the ground, and away from water, mold, fungus and insects.

To circulate around and through it in order to speed the seasoning process.

Begin at one end by stacking logs into cribbing — rows of three logs each, stacked perpendicular to each other — and building upward. Once a cribbed end is at least four feet high — a standard cord of wood measures 4 feet by 4 feet by 5 feet — begin stacking the logs horizontally. About eight feet from the first cribbing, begin a second crib and build upward. If the cribbing is built properly, each should stand on its own without leaning. Will be the time between the cribs accordingly.

Avoid stacking logs too tightly, and leave plenty of space for air to circulate. Also, it's best not to stack a woodpile taller than 8 feet. Otherwise, if it becomes unstable as the wood is withdrawn, it could fall on you. Besides,



It's best to determine where you intend to build your woodpile before the wood is delivered. It should be situated far enough from the house and garage so as not to create snakes, rodents, termites and other critters to take up residence in your own dwelling. It should be as far away from your woodshed as possible, through 100 yards of waist-deep snow to reach it.

People like suggestions siting your woodpile in southern exposure, much like a vegetable garden, to help the 5' stacked cure. Choose a level, dry area where water doesn't pool. In my case, I mowed a 12-foot by 36-foot area of scrub brush behind last year's woodpile and covered it with a ground tarp to keep the poison ivy from spreading through the wood in the spring.

Next, lay out your wooden pallets either end to end or in a U shape. Ideally, your woodpile should allow air

to enter your woodpile easily if difficult to remove the snow that will inevitably accumulate on top.

When the woodpile is finished, drape a tarp over it, leaving the sides open to the elements. Knot, cut four lengths of rope, drape them across the tarp and tie each end to a bridle to hold the tarp down on the wind. One local logger suggests cutting the rope segments short enough to allow the bridle to dangle from each side. That way, as the woodpile dries down throughout the winter, there's no need to raise the tarp down.

Admittedly, my latest woodpile will win no awards for aesthetic beauty, nor will Architectural Digest be sending a photographer over anytime soon. Still, the cleanup has been to be enjoyable already and we're not far from heating through the winter of 2007. ♥

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